**Multiple Intelligences Reflections**

**Chapter One – The Foundations of MI Theory**

Chapter One of *Multiple* *Intelligences* by Thomas Armstrong introduces readers to eight intelligences established by Howard Gardner. These intelligences include people such as linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and musical learners. As a teacher it is key that I cater not just to the ways that I like to learn but also all eight of the intelligences. I am highly interpersonal with a splash of bodily-kinesthetic. I like to learn by communicating with others, bouncing ideas around the room, and doing physical activity. But, it is guaranteed that not all of my future students will learn the way that I learn. There will be musical kids sitting along side naturalists and intrapersonals and I need to be prepared for this. The most important lesson I can learn from this chapter is that I must always be vigilant of how I am presenting my material. To become a great teacher I need to create a classroom where all eight of the intelligences can flourish.

I found it very interesting that each person has all eight intelligences but just functioning at different levels. I see myself as completely musically illiterate. I like music but I very weak in that area. However, this is not due to a lack of brainpower or genetics. It is simply because I never had a mentor or family member that led me down the path of musical expression. I think it is important for me to remember that, as a teacher, all eight intelligences are inside someone ready to be ignited. My goal is to teach how the student learns best. But, I do want my future students to try new ways of thinking that push them to places they might find exciting.

**Chapter Two – MI Theory and Personal Development**

As I stated in my previous blog entry I feel very week in certain intelligences and strong in others. The activity in class that let us identify which intelligences we are showed that I am not too proficient in being a musical, naturalist, or spatial learner. This honestly scares me because I want to provide for my students the best learning experience I can offer. I do not want my future students to suffer just because I cannot present the material the way they learn best. Chapter Two of *Multiple Intelligences* by Thomas Armstrong leaves the reader some tips in fixing this gap between teacher and student. Armstrong suggests using colleagues and students who are strong where I am not to lend a helping hand or provide ideas for different strategies. Armstrong also proposes using technical resources to assist in drawing connections between the students’ mind and the material being presented. I will definitely remember these simple suggestions when I become a teacher one day.

I am thankful that Armstrong does say that, “most people can develop all their intelligences to a relatively acceptable level of mastery (27).” There is hope that I can develop the traits that I wish to improve in. Reading this book and Thursday’s class about multiple intelligences has really opened my eyes to how diverse people can be. I wish that other professors on this campus were more aware of how different students can be from themselves. I have had too many classes at the collegiate level that have been straight lectures with nothing besides a podium. It is hard to be taught by professionals who do almost everything we are told not to do.

**Chapter 3 – Describing intelligences in Students**

The most interesting point I found in Chapter Three was the idea that the teacher should look for a child’s strongest intelligence by how they misbehave in class. I think this is a great idea because I know I do this but never realized it until just now. If I am distracted or bored I talk to those beside me or fidget around, which now makes perfect sense. The authors suggest keeping either a digital or written record of these behaviors and using them to identify the student’s strength. I believe this is a great idea and I will certainly be using this in my future classroom. It struck me as odd that of the many ways to discover a student’s intelligence one option was not to simply ask the student directly. No one knows the student better than himself or herself and being upfront and honest would most likely not hurt the child.

Of course, asking other teachers and parents about the student is a great way to obtain valuable observational information. Looking at school records and photocopying them seems a little intrusive to me, but it certainly is an option to be thought of. Overall, I believe the message of this chapter is that it is key that a teacher tries their best to get to know their students. Knowing their preferences, strengths, and dislikes can go a long way in building a relationship and providing a better education for that child.

**Chapter 4 – Teaching Students about MI Theory**

I think it is a great idea to introduce Multiple Intelligence Theory to a class. The book seems to be more focused on introducing it to elementary students, but I still feel like it would be very useful in a high school setting. This book has got me thinking that I want MI theory to be an essential part of my classroom design.

If I do introduce MI theory during the first week of classes and explain that it will be a big part of the whole year then I think kids would feel more at ease and comfortable in my class. Especially if they never had a teacher take the time to highlight individual strengths before starting a school year. I think it would be a great idea to explain that I will try my best to have all eight MI’s woven into my class. I am envisioning always making sure I have eight different project options for a class. Say I have four big projects over the course of a semester. I would have a student be able to choose which option they wanted to show they learned the material. Maybe I would work in a rule where a student cannot do all four projects in the same intelligence area. Either one or two projects have to be a different area other than where they are most comfortable in. I think this would allow students to explore different ways of thinking and improve areas that are not as strong. It is surprising to me how excited I actually am that I may be able to do this some day.

**Chapter 10 – MI Theory and Assessment**

The challenge for educators is to make an assessment that authentically measures the learning that a student accomplishes from a lesson. Chapter 10 discusses the downfall of standardized tests and explains how we can combine assessment and Multiple Intelligences theory. One authentic assessment type is simply observing the student while he or she solves problems. Documenting student observations through anecdotal records, work samples, audio files, and many more are a great way to keep a running record of students. This information can then be used to cater to the student’s needs. I like the idea of keeping small notes, but I do not know if I should ethically videotape my students? I need more clarification on when and how this would be appropriate.

One of the most important points made in the chapter is, “the theory of multiple intelligences suggests that any instructional objective can be taught in at least eight different ways, so too does it imply that any subject can be *assessed* in at least eight different ways (136).” Meaning, why do we need standardized tests that only allow students to express what they learned linguistically or logically-mathematically? Thomas Armstrong gives us the example of Huck Finn. Instead of a multiple choice questions (resembling the SATs), students should be allowed to pick from eight different types of answers, all connected to one multiple intelligence. As a teacher it is important for me to remember that choice in assessment is key. In history much is linguistic. But my challenge is to allow my students to express themselves in whatever way suits them best. When I start to draft up my own test questions and projects I need to always be vigilant that I account for my different learners.

**UbD/DI Reflections**

**Chapter One – UbD and DI: An Essential Partnership**

The first chapter of *Integrating* by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe discusses why Differential Instruction and Understanding by Design should be combined in the classroom. The book states that effective teachers focus on who, where, what, and how they teach. Looking at teaching this way gives us a reason to include both models into our profession. The authors state that Understanding by Design “speaks most fully about ‘what’ and ‘how’ (2)” and Differentiated Instruction “focuses on whom we teach, where we teach, and how we teach (3).”

If there was one sentence that really stuck out to me in this chapter it was on page ten when the authors state, “Understanding by Design is a way of thinking, not a program (10).” This sentence stuck out to me because as I was reading one word kept popping into my mind, and that word was flexible. To me, in order to succeed as a teacher it sounds like it is absolutely important that I be as flexible as possible. As the book says, there are students who “need to move around to learn, students who need reading support…and so on (10).” If I am to be a teacher who follows Universal by Design and Differential Instruction practices then I better make sure I become flexible and good at thinking on the run.

**Chapter 2 – What Really Matters in Teaching (The Students)**

It is my personal opinion, and I am sure all teachers agree, that we teach for the kids. Any other reason and you have to wonder why be a teacher at all? So, it makes a lot of sense to me when Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe say in *Integrating* that, “students should always be in the forefront of our thinking as we make, implement, and reflect on our professional plans (13).” I want to be a teacher for others, not myself, so this chapter really strikes a chord with me. The underlying theme of Chapter Two is that school is about the students, and “[kids] come wanting to make sense of the world around them and their place in that world (16).”

Chapter Two also stresses the importance of teacher responsiveness. This means that it is key that a teacher be aware of all of the different needs and factors that affect his or her students and is practicing Differential Instruction. One tip that the book suggests to make the teacher more responsive to student’s needs is to, “allow students to express their learning in ways that best suit their strengths through varied products and performances (21).” This is something that I want to be central to my teaching style. I think student choice is crucial to learning and developing mature citizens. Being a “beach ball” type learner myself I know how nice it is when a teacher allows their students to express themselves how they wish, rather than only through one medium.

**Chapter 3 – What Rally Matters in Learning (Content)**

When building curriculum, teachers and administrators must consider essential questions that give clarity and direction to important content areas. Essential questions are basically big ideas that “provide a conceptual lens through which the specific content in the standards may be addressed (27).” To do this the book suggests planning backwards so that students may realize the desired essential questions. This seems to make sense to me and I understand why professionals are emphasizing this way to plan. Our class is now starting to get into backwards planning. At the moment it does not make too much sense to me but I know it will be the method I use to plan how my classroom is run.

I am glad that the book included a “Frequently Asked Questions” section into this chapter because I had the same question as the first one offered, and that was “How do we identify the big ideas that we want students to understand (32)?” How does one choose those “big idea” questions that are so important to a teachers’ plan? Relying on colleagues and considering state, national, and provincial standards are good platforms to start out with according to McTighe and Tomlinson. I know I will be having much more practice in Practicum and Student Teaching with developing essential questions, but at the moment it is somewhat of an overwhelming concept. If backwards planning is so important I certainly do not want to formulate an essential question that is not very good.

**Chapter 4 – What Really Matters in Planning for Student Success**

The main point behind Chapter Four is that curriculum is only half of what teachers actually teach. The other half, and arguably more important, is that teachers are there to educate human beings as well. The authors laid out a couple attitudes and skills that teachers who like to help students often do. Some are that they establish clarity about curricular essentials, develop flexible classroom teaching routines, and expand a repertoire of instructional strategies, among other things (40). Teachers that look out for the best for their students also make sure that their curricular essentials are clear. This clarity allows for more pinpoint differentiation and makes sure teachers avoid confusing situations.

The chapter continues to discuss different scenarios of teachers who care for their students and use differential instruction. Many of these scenarios are what I visualize teaching to be like. I want to be the teacher that no one has to question whether or not I care about my students. One example is Mr. Connelly, who uses all of his students’ best characteristics to make sure his classroom runs smoothly. He asks his kids during the first week of school what rules and routines they think works best. He also asks them to reflect on those rules and routines once established while also sharing his own perspective. This builds student interaction with the teacher as well as autonomy and a feeling of maturity.

**Chapter 5 – Considering Evidence of Learning in Diverse Classrooms**

Chapter 5 concerns student assessment and how teachers should structure their classroom around how they are going to assess their students. Jay McTighe and Carol Ann Tomlinson use the analogy of a photo album in regards to how teachers should use assessments. One picture, or one big test, is not an accurate portrayal of a person. But, many individual pictures placed together create a representation of someone’s life overtime. I think this is a great analogy for how assessment should be conducted. In high school I liked how we had multiple tests, quizzes, and projects because it took the pressure off of the assignments because they were worth less in the long run. Here in college everything is the opposite. Most of my classes in college so far have been reliant on so few assignments that each one is do or die. I would like to structure my classroom like a “photo album.”

The rest of the chapter continues to discuss how assessment should be considered and when assessment should take place. One point that the book stressed that I agree with is that assessment should not always be taken at the end of a unit. Rather, pre-assessment and ongoing examinations should be used to keep the teacher in touch with the needs of his or her students. Another concept I really liked and will certainly be using in my classroom is the tic-tac-toe format of assessment. This is when a teacher had specific assessments in mind but then lets the student pick which one they want to do themselves. A tic-tac-toe board has three columns with nine choices. In this case each column is a different type of assessment (Written, Visual, Oral) and the student must choose one of each. I love this idea and I think my students will appreciate the choice of assessment.

**Fair Isn’t Always Equal Reflections**

**Chapter 1 – The Differentiated Instruction Mind-Set**

Over winter break I read *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* by Rick Wormeli while traveling from Maine to beautiful Ecuador. So, it will be nice to re-read the book and pick up on things I previously missed and be able to express my thoughts through this blog. Chapter One acts as an introduction to the concept of Differential Instruction, which Rick Wormeli describes as “doing what’s fair for students (3).” It is what teachers do to help their students succeed to the best of their ability. To explain Differential Instruction Wormeli uses the analogy of a child with glasses. All the students do not have glasses, so they are not equal, yet it would not be fair to take away the glasses that a student needs to see with. The glasses are a metaphor for scaffolding and assistance, something that there is a bunch of in a classroom that is differentiated. Apparently there are critics to this mode of thinking, but I take it as doing everything possible to ensure that your students flourish.

Thinking back, there was plenty of differential instruction in my high school. I plan on modeling what I learned as well as developing upon these new ideas. Some of these concepts are common sense to me and that probably stems to how I was taught. Of course I’ll provide my students with graphic organizers if they need one. I know I will rephrase questions for students if they do not understand. Those are little things. I think Wormeli is trying to change the culture of teaching across the country. To us young bloods it seems like common sense but to others it may seem like being soft on students. Either way, the first chapter makes a lot of sense to me.

**Chapter 2 – Mastery**

The essential question of this chapter is something along the lines of, “How do we know if a student has mastered a concept?” Wormeli starts the chapter by trying to define mastery, which he proves is a slippery term to pin down. Everyone’s opinion of mastery is different. One definition I did not realize the relevance of the first time I read the book was Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins’ idea of the Six Facets of Learning. The same facets that we just used to create our Stage I lesson plans. It is interesting how much I am picking up the second time around. One idea that Wormeli discusses is having students write out how they got their final answer because it shows true mastery (15). This is one idea that I will start using immediately for my Statistic students. Concerning my more distant future, this idea works very well in a history class because much of the content is already expressed through spoken and written words.

One process I am nervous about is deciding what exactly my students should master and what I should leave out. When we are talking about history everything is connected. Leaving out parts of history is something that drastically alters the story being told. I feel like I will have trouble with teaching too much because I do not want to leave out important information. I agree that backwards planning and relying on colleagues will help me in this process. But, I still worry. I am sure with experience I will find the right balance between content and time.

Chapter 3 – Principles of Successful Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom

Rick Wormeli prefaced his book *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* by saying that the readers should have an open mind and that there will be stuff in here that we’ll disagree with. The beginning of Chapter Three introduces how a differentiated classroom assesses students. One thing that Wormeli proposes is for students to be given the final exam on the first day and allowed to keep it. He argues that the teacher should always have the end goal in mind when teaching. This backwards planning helps weed out what it important and what is not. I remember Dr. Lance Neeper did this last year in SED101. It was interesting to see how much I learned in just 7 weeks when comparing my two identical tests. I just do not know if I would leave the tests in the hands of my students for the whole unit.

Although I do not know if I follow Wormeli on every issue, I do agree that teachers must plan with the end in mind. To do this teachers must first establish their enduring questions that will act as the foundation for future lessons. From these essential understandings teachers create their pre, formative, and summative assessments. From these assessments teachers receive feedback, and that is where true progress can be made. With feedback comes learning and understanding. That is why Wormeli really stresses the importance of concise and timely assessment that captures how a student is doing in the class. Wormeli also says that teachers should allow for 100% make-up on all tests, which is something I am slowly starting to get behind.

**Chapter 4 – Three Important Types of Assessment**

One of the three assessment types strongly suggested by Rick Wormeli in Chapter 4 is requiring students to keep a portfolio of their work. This can either be digital or hardcopy, and I honestly like the sound of this idea. I think portfolios would really get the self-knowledge facet of learning because it would allow the students to easily reflect on their learning over time. The two other assessment types suggested are rubrics and student self-assessment. Concerning rubrics, I never realized how complicated they could be. My teachers often had rubrics in high school and it was nice to see what one had to do to achieve an A. But I never knew of all the different possibilities there are in rubric creation: holistic or analytic, how many categories, how should I label them? Even the words used to describe the categories should be considered. I like exceptional, strong, capable, developing, beginning, and emergent. I find sophisticated, mature, good, adequate, and naïve to be a little harsh sounding. It is a little over-whelming to see how much goes into creating rubrics.

The third assessment type suggested is using student self-assessments because it “provides invaluable feedback and helps students and their teachers set individual goals (51).” I remember often receiving these at the end of the year during high school. Thinking back, getting them at the end of the year did not really do much to further my learning. By then it was too late for the teacher to use that information because school was ending. Maybe when I am a teacher I will work student self-assessments into the middle of my unit. I like the idea of students keeping reflective journals, and the portfolio idea mentioned earlier could also be used as a self-assessment tool.

**Chapter 5 – Tiering Assessments**

In a differentiated classroom, tiering is often used to provide the right level of challenge to the right students. The example given in Chapter Five is how a teacher might tier a lesson about graphing mathematical equations. For Early Readiness Students certain aspects of the problem are given to the student to help them understand the concept. For Advanced Readiness Students the problem difficulty is increased, something “Ann Tomlinson calls ‘ratcheting’ up or down the challenge level (56).” It is my understanding that this is one of the hot items discussed about Differentiated Instruction. To some teachers it may seem like being easy on some students and harder on others. I believe Wormeli is trying to explain is that the job of teachers is to help students understand and learn. If providing tiering helps a student do so them I am all in. People learn at different speeds, so why not provide assistance where assistance is due?

Another suggestion to help tiering lessons is using a learning contract. I am less inclined to use this tool than learning menus, however. Learning menus are similar to “drop-down menus in a favorite word processing package” where a student can choose specific criteria they want to meet (62). The teacher establishes certain tasks that are non-negotiable. But, the student can set up their own checkpoints on progress and other areas they want to explore. The most appealing method of tiering to me is using the Tic-Tac-Toe Board, and I will certainly be using this in my classroom in the future. This concept allows students to fill out tasks in separate columns. Each task utilizes one of the multiple intelligences. I really like this idea and when I first read about it over winter break I instantly knew I wanted to implement it some day.

**Chapter 6 – Creating Good Test Questions**

If there was one thing I did not like about high school it was ambiguous test questions. The kind where I had to ask myself what the teacher wanted me to say. I agree with Rick Wormeli when he says that test questions like these have no place in a differentiated classroom. I do not think multiple-choice questions as a whole are wrong. I will probably use them in my future classroom. What Chapter 6 is trying to get to is that a successful differentiated classroom uses several “traditional and non-traditional questions and prompts (75).” Traditional problems are things such as multiple-choice questions and essays. Some non-traditional examples are things such as exclusion brainstorming and analogies. My Ecology professor last year had many different types of prompts on his tests throughout the year. From graphs, to short essays, to multiple choice and matching. His tests were hard but also really nice. I envision my tests to be similar to what his were like.

Much of Chapter 6 contains do’s and don’ts about phrasing and structuring test questions. Tips such as avoiding confusing negatives, making prompts clear, avoiding repeating similar questions too much, and being wary of timed tests. One tip I liked was to try and make questions fun. I do this with my Supplemental Instruction students. I often create silly questions concerning football players, flamingos, or deodorant. I think it makes completing a math problem that much more fun, which is beneficial because making people who normally hate math enjoy it just a little more is a win.

**Chapter 6 – Abstract and Synthesis**

**Abstract**

Chapter 6 of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* by Rick Wormeli concerns how teachers should create good test questions. Many tips were suggested by Wormeli, such as using a variety of questions, making questions clear, avoid using negatives, keeping them short, and many more. Wormeli stresses that it is not fair to trick a student or for them to have to guess what their assessor wants them to say. Tests should be authentic and show what students have learned. Tess sums up the chapter’s theme well when she says, “students grades should not depend on whether or not they can decipher test questions, their grades should reflect their knowledge of the content. (Tess).” To accomplish this teachers should also try and make tests fun and avoid timing tests. To learn more about assessment, and teaching in general, the Association for Middle Level Education has an excellent podcast series here.

**Synthesis**

It is clear to see that all of us have experienced the misfortune of inefficient tests. There was a general frustration from the class about past teachers that developed tests that were unfair and did not capture their true understanding of the material. Keira mentions that timed tests are dangerous and should be used with caution. Sean, and many others, said how multiple-choice questions can be frustrating if they are left ambiguous. And still more of us talked about how test anxiety can rear its evil head if assessments are not made well. As a whole our class appreciated the tips that Rick Wormeli provided in this chapter. Due to our past experiences many of us vowed to not subject our future students to what we had to go through. Basically, our goal “is to see what [our] students have learned, not to see how good they are at answering [a] confusing test. – Tori. To eliminate the test all together, one may look into Project Based Learning, or PBL.

**Combination of MI, Ubd/DI, and FIAE Reflections**

**Chapters 6, 7 (UbD/DI) Chapters 5, 6 (MI)**

The key for all teachers, and the focus of Chapters 5 and 6 of *Multiple Intelligences*, is to “translate the material to be taught from one intelligence to another (64).” To do this a teacher must plan out how one concept can be transformed multiple times for the different students in their class. There are many ways, some traditional and some innovative, in awaking the areas of the brain that have been left dormant for so long. In Chapter 5 Thomas Armstrong lists many techniques and activities teachers can use to translate material from one intelligence to another. Chapter 6 expands on some of these to give the reader more specific examples.

Chapter 6 of *Understanding by Design* by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe focuses on how a teacher can be responsive to their students in a differentiated classroom. Just like a teacher must be responsive to children’s different learning styles, teachers must also know when to differentiate. Chapter 7 of UbD concerns how to uncover the content. It has become too true that school curriculum has become a mile wide but only an inch thick. This does not lead much opportunity for student contemplation and discussion, but rather just the memorizing facts. To get into the material more the chapter suggests implementing the WHERETO framework. This process is set in the order of What, Why, Hook, Equip, Experiences, Rethink, Evaluation, Tailor, and Organize.

The challenge for me as a teacher is to find creative ways to engage all eight intelligences in my classroom. The Social Studies naturally appeals a lot to linguistic learners due to the material. I have been wondering a lot lately how historical information could be presented to a logical-mathematical, musical, or naturalist person. Some ideas presented in the book that I really like are activities such as Pictionary (Spatial), charades (Bodily-Kinesthetic), and peer sharing (Interpersonal). For my three challenge areas I like nature walks (Naturalist), mood music (musical), and Socratic questioning (logical-mathematical). Socratic questioning is something I am already familiar with because it the philosophy of Supplemental Instruction and I use it often in my Statistics class.

One core belief about curriculum that I totally agree with is that “students need opportunities to learn the ‘basics’ and opportunities to apply them in meaningful ways (85).” This quote from *Understanding by Design* uses an analogy of a coach and players to drive home the point. Too many “sideline drills” and not enough playing the “real game” is a strategy made for failure. That is why I think a project-based unit is a great idea. It limits the amount of worksheet-type learning and makes students apply their knowledge to real life applications. This in turn makes the class more engaging and allows room to appeal to the different intelligences. Along with using the WHERETO model I know I can become a successful teacher and truly engage my students.

**Chapters 7, 9, 13, 14 MI**

Chapters 7, 9, 13, and 14 of *Multiple Intelligences* largely discuss how MI can be ideally used in a classroom, and how MI schools should look. In Chapter 7, Thomas Armstrong stresses again that all eight intelligences should have a place in any given classroom. He focused more specifically on how a classroom can be set up to help different students to learn. From having an aquarium (naturalist) to having tables set up in an inviting way (spatial), there is a lot that goes into creating an inviting and confortable learning area. This way of looking at a classroom is called the environmental model, or an ecological model.

Chapter 9 concerns what Howard Gardner considers the ideal MI school. The ideal MI would be very different from what our schools look like today. We are too reliant on logical-mathematical and linguistic learning, even though the other six intelligences can easily be used in all classes. Gardner suggests that schools should be more like children’s museums or the old apprenticeship model. I think this is a great idea. How natural is forcing a child to fill out a worksheet or fill in the blanks? When do adults ever have to do half of the things we make our students do? I love the idea of moving towards a Project Based curriculum where students are able to *create* not just memorize and repeat.

To highlight what an MI school looks like, Armstrong discussed the Key Learning Community in Indianapolis, Indiana. This school does many things differently than the public schools we have in place today, like using school-wide themes and providing students access to a “flow room.” To me, the four chapters can be summed up in one quote: multiple intelligence theory is all about “unleashing children’s potentials in all intelligences (Armstrong, 128).” To do that I think we need a change in educational culture here in America, something I think the book eludes to multiple times. I agree that we should let students expand upon all their intelligences. However, there are dangers to an MI school. If we pigeon hole a child early into only one intelligence we would be messing with the very fabric of our society. Like the chapter says, it could lead to forcing children into “a small niche that would serve a narrowly segmented society (Armstrong, 129).” That is why we must build MI schools effectively and rely on positive teachers to guide the future leaders of our world.

Chapter 13 talks about other applications of MI Theory, specifically with computer technology, cultural diversity, and career counseling. Armstrong provides his readers with many Web 2.0 tools in this chapter, all of which can be used for different intelligences. He then goes on to discuss how all cultures have the eight intelligences. But, they are valued differently and are taught for different reasons and in different ways. Our modern culture is the only culture that requires students to remember random numbers for tests. Rather, other cultures pass stories and myths verbally which are often memorized.

The last chapter discusses the possibility of existential intelligence.

I also feel that existential intelligence activities in the classroom could lead to complications. I found the section on existential intelligence concerning history very fascinating. Ideals, beliefs, religion, they are what drive everyone. So yes, they do have a place to be discussed in a history class and I plan to have thoughtful and safe discussion on these issues in my classroom. I was not aware at the time that the existential intelligence covered discussions like this. I personally love debating philosophical questions about everything and to anyone who will talk to me. I’ve learned some people have no care to be philosophical or think about “what ifs.” I belief it is a great thing to discuss the problems of our world and talk about how our world works. Although this sounds perfect for a Social Science, I know this can lead to problems. If I were to work in these discussions into my classroom I must be very mindful of the possibilities that could arise. Angry parents, student fights, religious battles, just to name a few off the top of my head. Still though, debate is essential to our way of life, so I will be continuing to think of ways in which debate and peace can live harmoniously together in my classroom someday.

**Chapter 8 UbD/DI and Chapters 8, 11, 12 MI and Article**

Chapter Eight of *Understanding by Design* is about how to strike the balance between evaluator of student work and being a supportive advisor. To be balanced teachers must use valid assessments. Valid assessments determine what we intend them to do and not any other outside factors. Grades should not be based off of other students’ grade such as a grading curve, and not everything should be included in grades. I personally believe that homework should either be a very insignificant part of the final grade or nothing at all. Participation will be a big part in my class and attempts at homework will fall under this category. Teacher that graded homework was something I did not like about high school and I think it is unfair to give a grade to something that is supposed to be practice. The book suggests that class participation be kept separate from the overall class grade, which I disagree with. I think participation shows a student who is active in their learning and can help boost a students’ grade that tries hard but still has trouble with the material.

Another role of the teacher is that of classroom manager. There are many bad ways to try and get a hold of students’ attention. Chapter 8 of *Multiple Intelligences* suggests only as fraction of the types of “hooks” a teacher can do that appeal to different intelligences. I think that having an effective hook to start class would be a great way to prepare my future students to learn. I feel like that if I do the hooks effectively for the first month or so then students would just come to school expecting to learn and I may end up not needing a hook every class. Appealing to multiple intelligences can also help managing behaviors and communicating class rules.

Multiple Intelligence theory is very useful in helping special needs students succeed in the classroom. MI theory can help highlight what a student *can* do instead of what they *can’t* do. They can be used in IEPs, which would help teachers understand where the strengths of their special needs students are. This would make inclusion classrooms that much more fluid and help change the culture of America. MI theory can even help in retaining information. A teacher that can identify how their students’ memory works can appeal to that child’s intelligence. Too often do we only try to memorize things in a linguistically or logically. MI theory tells us *how* kids learn, which is a very powerful tool.

**Chapters 7, 8, 9,10 FIAE**

To fully posses a classroom that utilizes differentiated instruction a teacher must understand how to implement and interpret grades. As teachers we should always have assessments in mind when we plan our lessons. Ultimately we teachers are assessors, and it is our job to get students to a point where they are able to show what they have learned through authentic assessments. That is why grading is such a tricky practice. There is a natural subjective nature to attaching a single letter or number to a whole piece of work. As Rick Wormeli states, “We can do better” (Wormeli, 90). But we cannot abolish grades completely, at least most teachers do not agree with this idea (Wormeli, 94). I also agree that grades are justified and can give a sense of level of understanding and provide feedback. I feel like I do not know how to function in a school if there were no grades. I have been a product of the system for too long to throw grading out of the window, although I wish I could.

Chapter 8 of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* attempts to establish why we grade. Six reasons were given: to document student and teacher progress, to provide feedback to the student and family, to inform instructional decisions, to motivate, to punish, and to sort students. The first three are the ones that Wormeli tried to emphasize. The last three diminish the meaning of grades and only serve to distance students from wanting to pursue learning. As a student I do not think I ever ran across a teacher who deliberately tried to punish a student through grading, but there were teachers who tried to motivate us. This of course is extrinsic motivation, which is much less effective than intrinsic motivation. Wormeli also suggests that teachers should not grade participation. I do not agree with this because I feel participation is important. To me, grades do not have to be all about the content. Other factors should be included in the final grade that people use in the real world.

One policy I want as a teacher is that there will be no penalty for revisions of work. If a student hands an assignment in to me on time they can re-do that assignment how many times they want until a week before school ends. Also, I hated when teachers graded my homework. I will not do that as a teacher. Among the other eight tips provided by Wormeli in Chapter 9 I agree with most of them. But the two mentioned earlier I am most passionate about. Allowing re-dos is expanded upon more in Chapter 10. Reading about it more makes even more sense. I think students would appreciate this policy and would help the students who learn at different paces.

**Chapters 7, 8, 9,10 FIAE – Team Abstract and Synthesis**

**Abstract**

Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* by Rick Wormeli largely concerns how, when, why, and what teachers should grade in a [differentiated classroom](http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/from-differentiated-instruction-to-differentiated-assessment/" \t "_blank). To fully posses a classroom that utilizes differentiated instruction a teacher must understand how to implement and interpret grades. Wormeli stresses that teachers should always have assessments in mind when they are planning their lessons. Ultimately, teachers are assessors tasked with the job to get students ready to show their understanding through authentic assessment. However, there is a natural subjective nature to attaching a single letter or number to a whole piece of work. As Rick Wormeli states, “We can do better” (Wormeli, 90). To do this, Wormeli suggests several ways to structure our grading system along with many tips of what teachers should and should not do. Some practices suggest not grading non-academic aspects and allowing redo’s for all graded assessments. The heart of these chapters concerns why we grade. A teacher’s assessments should document student and teacher progress, provide feedback, and inform instructional decisions only. Once assessment is used to motivate, punish, or sort students then grading loses its meaning. The best thing a [teacher](http://www.teachthought.com/" \t "_blank) can do is to establish a grading system that is transparent, informative, fair, and diversified.

**Synthesis**

These four chapters had a lot to say about the specifics of grading, and raised a lot of controversial issues. Collectively we all seemed to agree that it is a good policy to allow students to redo work. The general consensus was that we should never penalize our students for multiple attempts at mastery, and that these attempts are part of the learning process and should be embraced instead of rejected. We also discussed the confusion on what grades actually mean, and if they are true indicators of mastery or not. If an ‘A’ to one teacher is a ‘B’ to another, how are we – and more importantly, our students – supposed to figure out what grades stand for? We all want our [assessments](http://www.edutopia.org/blogs/beat/assessment" \t "_blank) to mean something and for grades to be constructive and feedback-oriented instead of arbitrary. There was debate amongst the class about whether or not participation should be included in grading; some of us said that it should be included, and others disagreed. These views seem to come from the different kinds of education we received, and the experiences we’ve had that worked and didn’t work for us. Grading for effort was an iffy topic too, but we did agree that an effort grade can show teachers the difference between a student who isn’t trying and a student who just needs more help. Overall, we came to the conclusion as a class that the most important thing about grading is that, whatever method methods we use, they have to be accurate indicators of mastery.

**FIAE 11, 12, 13, 14**

There are two sides of teaching. On one side we are the educators and motivators. We encourage students to do their best, befriend them, and teach them valuable lessons. On the other side we are their evaluators and authority figures. On this side we almost have to act with the mind of a businessman. These four chapters lean more towards how teachers should conduct the business aspect of their profession. Chapter 11 is about six different glaring questions teachers often have that are usually controversial. One that stood out for me is whether or not to put in a zero for a students’ incomplete work. Wormeli suggests that educators put in a 60 for incomplete work and reasons that is fair because a zero is too much of a negative. Now, maybe I’m just old school, but a zero is way more motivating in getting students to finish work than a 60. The message behind his book is that it is not being easy on the student but rather just fair. But, I just think giving a student a 60 is too soft and my teachers never did that for me. Another business topic that a teacher needs to consider is what kind of grading scale to implement in their classroom, which is discussed in Chapter 12. Personally, I like how a 100-point scale sounds. It is not that I dislike classes that use a 4.0 scale or any other sort of scale. I just think a 100-point scale is more straightforward and makes it easier to understand one’s grade.

The last two chapters concern how a teacher can format their grade books and report cards in a differentiated classroom. When I first started learning the teaching profession I was so naïve to how much time must be spent considering things such as these. As a student I never took notice of how the teacher was structuring their grade book or how they created report cards. I do like the idea of grading both personal progress and achievement against standards. I feel like students and teachers always want to know *why* they or their child got the grade they did. I want my report cards and grade book to be as straightforward and simple as possible. I think it would be valuable to include a portion of the report card that allowed for personal comments about the individual student. They used to always do this up through middle school and then report cards become more vague and less user friendly in high school. I want to let the teachers and students know that I will be on their side, and I think people would appreciate seeing a report card that showed some effort in it.